



## Community for a New Silver Spring Library

### History of the New Silver Spring Library

In 1998, the Facilities Work Group of the Revitalization Steering Committee voted to include a new library in the new Civic Building planned for downtown Silver Spring. County Executive Duncan indicated that he supported a new library eventually, but not one housed in the Civic Building.

In September of 1999, after getting funds from the Montgomery County Council, a Silver Spring Library Planning Committee began meetings to define the community's needs for a new library. The Committee was composed of Silver Spring residents who represented various civic associations in the library service area, ethnic groups, the Silver Spring Friends of the Library, the Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee, and the Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce. They met with representatives of the public schools, the Park and Planning Commission, the Regional Services Center, the Woodside Forest Civic Association, and the Library Department.

The Council of Presidents of Silver Spring Civic Associations and the Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee also initiated a library patron survey in the fall of 1999. Responses were gathered using Civic Association newsletters and at the library. The patron survey indicated that 97% of Silver Spring library patrons wanted a new library.

In February of 2000, a professional and scientific telephone survey of the community was done.

In April and July of 2000, public hearings were held to solicit additional input from the community.

In August of 2000, after 11 months of gathering and analyzing information, the Committee produced a final report with recommendations, *Community Based Library Services Plan for the Silver Spring Library*. This *Plan* detailed an initial program of requirements for the new library, along with significant demographic data and community inputs.

In the fall of 2000, funding was provided to move from the draft requirements in the Plan to identifying suitable sites for the new library. The Silver Spring Regional Center formed a Site Selection Committee composed of representatives of civic associations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Advisory Board, the Silver Spring Friends of the Library, the Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee, and persons with disabilities. The Site Selection Committee was assisted by staff from the Regional Center and the Department of Libraries.

In September of 2001, after reviewing 20 sites, the Site Selection Committee issued their final report (*Silver Spring Library Site Selection Recommendation*) with a comparative evaluation of 6 sites, including the current library site, and a final recommendation favoring the southwest corner of Wayne Avenue and Fenton Street.

In February of 2002, the Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee testified before the Montgomery County Council to urge acceleration of the funding for the new library. Plans at the time did not foresee beginning design until FY08.

In August of 2003, the Department of Public Libraries released its *Final-Revised Program of Requirements* for the new library. This detailed what is needed and desired in the new library.

In February of 2004, the Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee again testified before the Montgomery County Council to urge acceleration of the funding for the new library to earlier than FY08.

In the spring of 2004, the Montgomery County Council revised the FY05-FY10 CIP submitted by the County Executive to begin design funding of the new library in FY07 with \$282,000 and approved the site selected.

In addition, the Council included \$50,000 in FY03 and FY04 to examine issues surrounding the new library.

In March 2005, the Department of Libraries released its *Final-Revised Program of Requirements* for the new library. Updating the August 2003 report detailing of what is needed and desired in the new library. The POR was again updated September of 2005, which is the current, working version.

In April of 2005, the proposed acquisition of the site went through mandatory referral to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

In the remainder of 2005, the County Executive's office hired appraisers to assess the value of each of the 7 properties privately held on the proposed site (the 8<sup>th</sup> property is a condemned apartment building already owned by the county) and issued offer letters to each owner. By the end of the year, each owner had indicated their willingness to sell their property to the county. In November of 2005, new library advocates were told that the next step would be to complete the actual sales with each owner and that this would take approximately 6 months.

In January of 2006, County Executive Duncan submitted his FY07-FY12 CIP, which moved the \$282,000 in initial design funds for the new library back to FY09. This CIP also provided \$11.44 million for the supervision and purchase of the land in FY07.

In February of 2006, Community for a New Silver Spring Library and the Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee testified before the Montgomery County Council to ask that the design funding be restored to FY07.

On March 6, 2006, the HHS Committee of the Montgomery County Council voted to keep the New Silver Spring Library on track and restore the design funding. On March 21, 2006 the full Council endorsed this recommendation and restored the design funding, a decision that was sustained in the May 2006 final reconciliation.

Throughout 2007, the County acquired four properties needed for the new library site (the County already owns one site). Unfortunately, that left three properties on the new library site still in the hands of private owners. New library advocates were told that no design efforts could begin until the land was acquired.

In January 2008, Community for a New Silver Spring Library was told by the County Executive's office that the process for acquiring the remaining three sites was still underway. In addition, demolition was about to begin for two of the buildings on the library site. Again, new library advocates were told that until all of the land was acquired, design could not begin.

In February of 2008, Community for a New Silver Spring Library testified before the Montgomery County Council to ask that funding be sustained in the FY09-FY14 CIP, that a larger library be considered (based on updated demographic information provided by M-NCPPC), that the public be part of the design process, and that the library be given primary consideration in any design plans.

On April 24, 2008, The County Executive's Chief Administrative Officer, Timothy L. Firestine, sent the County Council a Memorandum indicating that the County Executive believed the new Silver Spring Library should be a single use building, but that the site as a whole would accommodate 118 housing units, of which 30% would be affordable housing, 30% would be workforce, and 40% would be market rate.

On April 29, 2008, the Health and Human Services Committee of the County Council expressed concerns over the design and plans for the new library, but also recommended providing a supplemental \$5 million for the final land acquisition.

On May 2, 2008, Council President Knapp and Members Ervin, Erlich, Berliner, and Leventhal sent a Memorandum to the County Executive raising a number of questions about the development of Fenton Village and, as a consequence, recommending a delay in the provision of library design funds.

On May 6, 2008, the County Executive replied to the Council indicating that questions about Fenton Village zoning are among the reasons why he recommends going forward with a stand alone library, so that the library can proceed while other issues are debated and worked through. He also pointed out that dual-use buildings generally take as much as two years longer to complete than single-use buildings.

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, the County Council adopted the following language for the FY09-14 CIP:

*Funds appropriated for this project in FY09 or previously must be used to develop multiple concept designs for mixed use of the complete parcel of land purchased through this PDF for the Silver Spring Library. Alternative concepts must include a single mixed-use building that includes the library, affordable housing, retail, arts, and community use; at least one option that maximizes density under current zoning; and options for use of any remaining space, such as park or green space, public plaza, and retail. Concepts must also accommodate future development of the Purple Line with alternatives for the relationship of the building or buildings to the Purple Line. Each concept must show how it integrates with the sector plan vision for*

*Fenton Village. Concepts must be developed through a charrette process for seeking and incorporating community input into the designs. The Executive must provide written progress reports to the Council by September 15, 2008, January 15, 2009, and March 15, 2009, and once at the end of conceptual design.*

In addition, the full Council provided a supplemental \$5 million needed to complete the land acquisition. The Council also determined not to provide any additional design funding, beyond what was already available, for any work to follow the conceptual design.